

HAMPTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
MINUTES
November 22, 2005

Budget Committee Members Present

Mary-Louise Woolsey, Chairman
Michael Plouffe, Vice Chairman
Ginny Russell, Selectman Representative
John Bridle, School Board Representative
John Kane, Precinct Representative
Maury Friedman
Dick Hansen
William Lally
Eileen Latimer
Jack Lessard
Richard Nichols
Michael Pierce
Charlie Preston

Excused

Russ Bernstein

Not Excused

Pat Collins

Others Present

James Barrington, Town Manager; Dawna Duhamel, Finance Director; Chief Hank Lipe, Hampton Fire Department; and Deputy Chief Chris Silver, Hampton Fire Department.

Chairman Woolsey called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Chairman Woolsey introduced the members of the Budget Committee.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Approval of Minutes – November 15, 2005

Moved by Mr. Lessard, seconded by Mr. Plouffe, to approve the Minutes of November 15, 2005.

Vote: 11 yes, 0 no, 2 abstentions (Kane, Latimer).

Chairman Woolsey said that Chief Wrenn had presented the Committee with his list of calls for service. This list was passed out to the members.

Chairman Woolsey reminded the members of the Committee that the next meeting on December 6 will be a major work session where the Committee will set a final total for the operating budget. She asked the members to make a list of important items that need to be brought to the attention of the Board of Selectman. Members should also have a bottom line figure ready.

Hampton Fire Department

Moved by Ms. Russell, seconded by Mr. Plouffe, to approve the following:

Hampton Fire Department	\$3,299,448
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Chairman Woolsey introduced Chief Hank Lipe and Deputy Chief Chris Silver.

Chief Lipe said that the budget for the Fire Department for 2006 is a very conservative budget. It does, however, include the reinstatement of four fire fighters and a part-time secretary which will bring the department close to the staffing it had prior to 2005. It does not include a Deputy Chief of Operations. There will be more training in 2006. The remainder of the budget reflects utilities and operating costs.

Administration

Mr. Nichols inquired about Holiday Pay. Chief Lipe explained that because the fire fighters work through holidays, they receive a lump sum at the end of the year to cover this item.

Mr. Pierce asked about the part-time firemen. There is nothing for this item in 2006. Chief Lipe said that the program was cut. Chairman Woolsey said that call fire fighters are problematical because most people are working at their regular jobs and the risk is very high.

Mr. Friedman said many other towns have significant numbers of call fire fighters. He said that from a financial point of view, it seems to be advantageous to the Town to have a call fire fighter force to call on as needed. Chief Lipe replied that this is restricted by the collective bargaining agreement. Mr. Friedman asked if it would be possible to re-examine this issue in the future as a means of handling peak loads. Chief Lipe said that to do this funds would have to be reinstated and it would have to be impact bargained with the unions. Chief Lipe said it would also not be cost efficient as there would be training costs, physical exams, etc.

Ms. Latimer asked about the staff level in the department. Chief Lipe said a staff level of 46 is proposed for 2006.

Mr. Friedman said he would like the Committee to know that the way the Town has operated has put this group in a very awkward position. The number being voted on includes only a part of the Fire Department costs. Ms. Russell said that it includes everything except ambulance which is a warrant article.

Fire Suppression

Mr. Hansen asked about overtime wages which show an increase of 25%. Chief Lipe said that this is due to increased training which is planned. Deputy Chief Silver said training on regular time is very hard to do. You need to train crews on an off duty basis which requires overtime.

Mr. Hansen asked about Career Incentive Wages which shows a \$67,000 increase. Chief Lipe said these wages are based on particular skill levels. This was increased by the Board of

Selectmen because of the additional four fire fighters being put back on the payroll. Incentives are based on salary stage increases.

Ms. Latimer asked how many would receive training. Chief Lipe said all would receive it. Ms. Latimer said it is important to keep track of these people and the Town's investment in them.

Chief Lipe said the department needs to rebuild its training program. Training that was lost in 2005 needs to be made up. It can't all be done in 2006, but a start can be made.

Mr. Kane said New Equipment was showing zero through the entire budget and asked Chief Lipe if he was comfortable with that. Chief Lipe said he felt the 2006 budget will meet certain objectives and if the department finds there are equipment needs, adjustments will have to be made.

Mr. Lally asked if any money is being received for backfill training. Chief Lipe said that there is money through Homeland Security and other mechanisms.

Chairman Woolsey asked if the department has been equipped with locator beacons. Chief Lipe said that this has been integrated into their system.

Mr. Bridle asked about the amount for gas and oil being down 40%. Chief Lipe said this is due to an adjustment on the marine unit.

Mr. Preston said he would like to see a list showing calls for service for the year for the marine unit. Chairman Woolsey asked Chief Lipe, at his discretion, to give the Committee a reasonable recap and overview. Mr. Preston asked if there were any costs for maintenance on the dock. Chief Lipe said that presently the Town would have to pick up costs. He said his understanding with the Department of Safety is that they are working towards partnerships.

Fire Prevention

There were no questions.

Training

Mr. Hansen asked if the department pays for a physical exam for every employee. Chief Lipe said this expense is being paid now by a federal grant, but the Town will pay for it in 2006. Chairman Woolsey asked if these exams take into account exposure to hazardous substances. Deputy Chief Silver said that this is taken into account and a baseline is established for each employee.

Communications

Mr. Hansen asked about the 14% increase in regular wages for dispatchers. Chief Lipe said that is the adjustment for the fourth person.

Mr. Kane asked why the number for radio maintenance went down. Chief Lipe said that it was due to major upgrades made in 2004.

Repair Services

Chairman Woolsey asked if the department contracts with an oil vender prior to the winter season. Chief Lipe said everything is fueled by gas.

Fire Stations & Buildings

Chairman Woolsey asked if the Board of Selectmen had made a decision on submitting a warrant article for a new fire station. Ms. Russell said that decision has not been made at this time.

Mr. Nichols said he wanted to make a comment to the bottom line. He did calculations and for Hampton it came to \$117,000 per man compared to Exeter which is \$95,000. Ms. Russell replied that Hampton does not have a standard population due to the summer population at the beach.

Vehicles/Rolling Stock

Chief Lipe said that the department maintains a six-year replacement program on ambulances.

The possible replacement of the ladder truck was discussed. Ms. Russell said that the Selectmen have not made a decision on this issue at this time.

Mr. Lessard asked about the number of ambulances. Chief Lipe said that they have two in use and one spare.

Chairman Woolsey said that overtime in the Fire Department has become an issue with the public. She said she was hopeful that the Board of Selectmen will reinstate the four fire fighter positions. It is important to put fire fighters on the street in this Town.

Chairman Woolsey thanked Chief Lipe and Deputy Chief Silver for their fine presentation.

Chairman Woolsey said she will send a condolence card on behalf of the Committee to Russ Bernstein on the passing of his father.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 6, 2005, at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Mr. Lessard **moved**. Seconded by Mr. Hansen, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

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The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Joan Rice
Secretary

Mary-Louise Woolsey, Chairman